

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 631

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJ: SECOND DAY OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON YUGOSLAV TERRORISM

REF: CANBERRA 1771

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ON SECOND DAY OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE RELATED TO MURPHY'S STATEMENT REPORTED REFTEL, MAIN ATTENTION WAS GIVEN TO REASONS FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL'S " RAID" ON ASIO OFFICES IN MELBOURNE. IN HIS ANSWERS MARCH 27, MURPHY SAID HE HAD " RAIDED" MELBOURNE HEADQUARTERS OF ASIO MARCH 16 BECAUSE HE HAD DISCOVERED COPY OF DOCUMENT IN VISIT TO ASIO HEADQUARTERS IN CANBERRA NIGHT BEFORE ABOUT WHICH HE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN INFORMED. QUESTIONS WERE ASKED ABOUT DOCUMENT WHICH MURPHY STATED HE COULD NOT DISCUSS BECAUSE OF SECURITY IMPLICATIONS. NEXT QUESTION WAS WHY HE " VISITED" ASIO OFFICES IN CANBERRA, TO WHICH MURPHY GAVE NO RESPONSE. IN COURSE OF OTHER QUESTIONING IN PARLIAMENT, PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM REPORTEDLY EVADED QUESTION ABOUT MELBOURNE " RAID" AND WAS " CALCULATEDLY ARROGANT" IN HIS MANNER WHEN REFUSING TO ANSWER. END SUMMARY.

2. IN STATEMENT ON SECOND DAY PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE,
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ATTORNEY GENERAL MURPHY SAID HE " VISITED" MELBOURNE HEADQUARTERS OF ASIO MORNING OF MARCH 16 AFTER HAVING DISCOVERED COPY OF DOCUMENT CONTAINED IN ASIO' S CANBERRA FILES DURING VISIT NIGHT BEFORE. FILE CONTAINING ORIGINAL DOCUMENT IN MELBOURNE HAD BEEN SEALED FOLLOWING MORNING AND ORIGINAL DOCUMENT HAS SINCE BEEN BROUGHT TO CANBERRA. WHEN ASKED WHY HE " VISITED" ASIO HEADQUARTERS IN CANBERRA MARCH 15 , MURPHY GAVE NO DIRECT RESPONSE. HE DID STATE, HOWEVER, THAT DOCUMENT HAD SOME DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO VISIT OF YUGOSLAV PRIME MINISTER BIJEDIC AND ALSO CONCERNED MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY, INCLUDING HIMSELF AND PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM. MURPHY DECLINED TO DISCUSS OR MAKE PUBLIC CONTENTS OF THE DOCUMENT ON THE BASIS THAT TO DO SO WOULD " INJURE NATIONAL SECURITY".

3. WHEN MURPHY WAS ASKED IF HE HAD INFORMED ANYONE BEFORE HIS " VISIT" TO ASIO HEADQUARTERS IN MELBOURNE, HE SAID HE HAD NOT. REPORTS SAY THAT WHEN PRIME MINISTER WAS INFORMED OF MURPHY' S ACTION MARCH 16 HE TURNED BRIGHT SHADE OF PURPLE. PETER BARBOUR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ASIO, HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE PROPOSED MURPHY VISIT EITHER, BUT ACCORDING TO MURPHY, HAS MADE NO COMPLAINT.

4. SPECULATIVE ARTICLE WRITTEN IN AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW MARCH 29 BY MAXIMILLIAN WALSH SAYS DOCUMENT MURPHY HAS REFUSED TO DISCUSS IS MEMORANDUM OF INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING WHICH TOOK PLACE AFTER ALP GOVERNMENT ELECTED IN EARLY DECEMBER. ACCORDING TO WALSH, MEMORANDUM STATES ASIO WOULD NOT MAKE ANY MORE INFORMATION ON CROATIAN TERRORISTS AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF NEW GOVERNMENT THAN WHAT WAS CONTAINED IN AIDE MEMOIRE OF AUGUST 1972 TO YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT. AIDE MEMOIRE APPARENTLY CONCERNS INCIDENT IN JUNE 1972 WHEN PARTY OF 19 CROATIANS CROSSED INTO YUGOSLAVIA FROM AUSTRIA TO ENGAGE IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. OF 19 PARTICIPANTS, SIX WERE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS AND THREE OTHERS HAVE PREVIOUSLY LIVED IN AUSTRALIA.

5. THUS FAR PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAS CONSISTENTLY KEPT OUT OF DISCUSSION OF MURPHY' S STATEMENT EXCEPT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO NOTE AS HE DID IN PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 27 THAT RE-
ORGANIZATION OF ASIO AND COMMONWEALTH POLICE WOULD
PROBABLY BE NECESSARY. SENATOR GREENWOOD, FORMER
ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MAID PERSONAL TARGET IN MURPHY'S
STATEMENT OF MARCH 27, HAS INDICATED HE WILL REPLY TO
MURPHY'S CHARGES IN PARLIAMENT NEXT WEEK.
RICE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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